SAVING THE OCEANS

The ocean: a beautiful vastness that teems with the rich color and movement of its inhabitants. From plankton to porpoises, the ocean's living creatures depend upon one another, just as we depend upon them for sustenance and survival.

Life itself began in the sea, but today our planet's oceans are dying. Marine life is threatened by wasteful and reckless human behavior: dumping of toxins and debris; destruction of coastlines and wetlands; oil drilling; overfishing. The symptoms are everywhere, in contaminated waters from the Gulf of Mexico to Antarctica. Greenpeace's Ocean Ecology campaign has one single, crucial goal: to save the earth's oceans before it's too late.

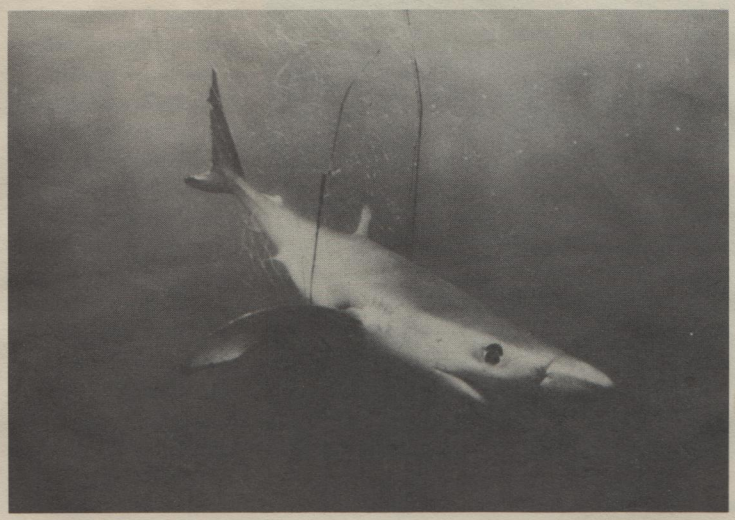
Saving the Whales

You're probably familiar with Greenpeace's all-out efforts to protect marine mammals such as dolphins and whales from destruction. The yearly slaughter of 40,000 whales ended in the late '70s after Greenpeace activists shut down whaling stations in Chile, Taiwan, the Philippines, Peru and Spain and after we pressured the International Whaling Commission to suspend all commercial whaling. More recently, we worked to stop the US tuna fleet from drowning nearly a quarter million dolphins a year in its nets. And we pushed through legislation that includes "dolphin-safe" labels on canned tuna.

But saving individual species from extinction won't save the oceans those species live in. All plants and animals in the sea are affected by the way we humans treat their environment. Too often, we've pillaged the oceans for their resources and fouled them with our wastes. Now we must recognize that the oceans' riches are finite and their capacity for abuse is limited. Most importantly, we must see that their fate is in our hands.

Whether you live in Maine or Missouri, on the coast or far inland, you are part of the delicate, complex ecological balance of the oceans. Is your household trash burned in an incinerator? The resulting toxic gas and ash can hitch a ride on a cloud drifting toward the ocean, a cloud which may already carry your car's exhaust, the fumes from your dry cleaner, or the smoke from your utility company's stacks.

Do you fertilize your lawn? Run a dishwasher? Rain washes fertilizer and weed killer into storm sewers and streams. Household waste runs through sewers to larger streams and rivers, joining waste water from power plants and factories. They all flow downstream to the sea, carrying our pollutants with them.



Roger Grace/Greenpeace

In the North Pacific alone, up to 1.8 million sharks die, *per year*, in driftnets.

Do you like fish? Enjoy a "dolphin-safe" tuna sandwich? Thanks to Greenpeace activists and others, fewer dolphins are caught in tuna nets, but the slaughter hasn't ended. Encirclement, the practice of setting nets on dolphins in order to catch the tuna that school below them, is still legal in the US and around the world. And US quotas still permit the killing of more than 20,000 dolphins a year.

The threats to marine life are complex, interrelated and often, hard to combat. But as we can try to understand the sources of danger to our oceans we can work to eliminate those dangers.

What is Threatening Our Oceans?

Ocean life is endangered in many ways. Our carelessness with waste has meant death and disease for countless marine animals and plants.

Toxic chemicals

We've all seen pictures of dead and dying birds, sea otters and fish after an oil spill. But oil, pesticides, solvents and other chemicals dumped into ocean water also weaken marine animals, making them easy targets for predators and disease. Too, toxics can attack the entire chain of ocean life. Starting in tiny plankton, toxins such as PCBs can build up in small fish and pass on to larger ones along the food chain. By the time a dolphin (or a human) makes a meal of a larger fish, it may be laced with lingering poisons.

Nutrient runoff

Many coastal areas are choked with excess nutrients from farm and home fertilizers, farm animal waste, city sewage and acid rain. This nutrient runoff boosts algae growth, which in turn robs water of oxygen and smothers other marine plants. Oysters, crabs, fish and sea grasses in coastal areas such as the Chesapeake Bay are increasingly diseased and scarce.

Offshore drilling and mining

Our unchecked consumption of land and fuel has destroyed vast expanses of coastline and ocean. We've drilled and filled — at the expense of ocean life.

Our search for oil, gas and minerals is desructive and it doesn't take an oil spill. Even routine drilling operations pollute the water and disturb the habitat of wildlife and birds. In Alaska, our government is pushing for

ocean ecology

GREENPEACE
1436 U STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20009
TELEPHONE: (202) 462-1177
FAX: (202) 462-4507

Saving Antarctica: A Victory for the Oceans — and Greenpeace

The ice covering the continent of Antarctica contains 70% of the world's fresh water reserves. Reason enough to protect this unique resource, the largest wilderness on the planet and, in many ways, the most fragile. But there are other reasons: among them, the killer whales, penguins, finfish and seals that make Antarctica's waters their home.

For the past decade, Greenpeace organizations worldwide have urged that Antarctica be preserved as a World Park, a zone of peace and an international research laboratory for future generations. Since 1987, Greenpeace has maintained World Park Base, the only non-governmental presence on Antarctica, to monitor the effects of human activity on the polar environment.

Over 1.5 million people signed Greenpeace's "Antarctic Declaration," a citizen's petition calling for the protection of Antarctica from overfishing, pollution and, most importantly, mining. The 39 nations that control Antarctica's fate as co-signers of the Antarctic Treaty responded in October 1991, by agreeing to a 50-year moratorium on mining. This spectacular victory for Greenpeace proves the effectiveness of persistent, passionate advocacy on behalf of the earth, and further fuels Greenpeace activists' commitment to a World Park for Antarctica.

For more information on Antarctica and Greenpeace's continuing work to demand enforcement of the mining moratorium, contact the Greenpeace Antarctica Campaign, 1436 U Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009.

more drilling along thousands of miles of coastline bordering wildlife areas. Such plans are senseless: less than two years worth of oil would be produced if current drilling plans are carried out. Besides, the government's own estimates show that renewable energy alternatives like solar and wind power could provide 70% of US energy needs, if those alternatives were funded and developed.

Coastal development

Three quarters of the fish caught in the US depend on coastal wetlands. We've filled in wetlands to build houses and factories and diverted fresh water for irrigation and home use. In the process, we've destroyed entire coastal ecosystems. California has already lost 90% of its wetlands; Louisiana loses 25,000 acres a year to development.

Overfishing

The oceans can feed the world for generations to come — if we manage them properly. Rapacious fishing will bring us cheap food today, but nothing tomorrow.

Most of us enjoy seafood. But our appetite for cheap, abundant fish is backfiring. Too many high-tech, expensive fishing ships now work our coastal waters and high seas. These "factory trawlers" routinely haul in up to 350,000 pound of fish in a single catch. Fish that can't be processed or sold (among them halibut, salmon and crab) are dumped back into the ocean — dead. Beyond the cost to ocean ecology, this short-sighted management has allowed fisheries to overdevelop, threatening the entire fishing industry with commercial collapse.

It's Not Too Late to Save the Oceans

Is there hope for earth's oceans? Of course there is, if we take action immediately. That's not just empty talk. Greenpeace has proven that marine life can be protected. When Americans learned that dolphins were dying by the thousands in tuna fishing nets, they reacted with a torrent of letters and phone calls to tuna companies and the government. The result? New laws and industry policies that will — if properly enforced — save tens of thousands of dolphins from becoming the waste product of the tuna fishing industry.

Dolphins (and seals, birds, sharks and finfish) will soon be protected from indiscriminate capture by 30-mile long driftnets. After ten years of citizen protest and Greenpeace documentaries, the United Nations responded recently with a proposal to end driftnet fishing world-wide by mid-1992. *If properly enforced,* this ruling could save more than 100 million animals per year.

More recently, Greenpeace moved closer to the preservation of Antarctica, the last real wilderness on earth, and home to countless species of marine animals. This year, 39 countries agreed to a 50-year moratorium on mining in Antarctica — a giant step toward protection of this global treasure.

Greenpeace has called on government and corporate decision-makers to commit themselves to saving the oceans. If we all make the same commitment, we will give ourselves and our children a priceless gift — a gift of the sea.

What Greenpeace Is Doing *What You Can Do*

Greenpeace has challenged corporate and government bodies to:

✓ **Develop fishing policies that protect marine life and ban encirclement.** Greenpeace's goal is not to shut down fisheries, but to maintain a healthy ecosystem. We're pressing policy makers to look at the big picture, instead of condoning the short-sighted, profit-driven factory fishing methods now in use. We also want to see an end to the cruel and wasteful practice of dolphin encirclement.

You can help by writing to the Secretary of Commerce, who oversees the National Marine Fisheries, and demanding responsible, long-term policies for fisheries. Urge the Secretary to revoke the permit which allows US fishing boats set on (encircle) dolphins.

✓ **Support energy alternatives to offshore drilling and mining.** Greenpeace opposes offshore leases to oil companies. We also work with Congress to promote public transportation and better gas mileage standards.

You can help by urging your representatives to vote against proposals for offshore oil and gas development, especially along the Alaska coastline. You can also help by riding the bus, joining a car pool, or buying a high-mileage car to reduce your personal use of oil.

✓ **Eliminate toxic pollution.** Landfills, incinerators and waste-trading are band-aids, not solutions. Greenpeace is working on land and sea to promote waste reduction and recycling and to stop pollution at its source.

You can help by pressuring your local government and industries to switch to non-toxic products. Support companies that are producing poison-free, environmentally sound products. Beware of "safe" products that are merely clever packaging.

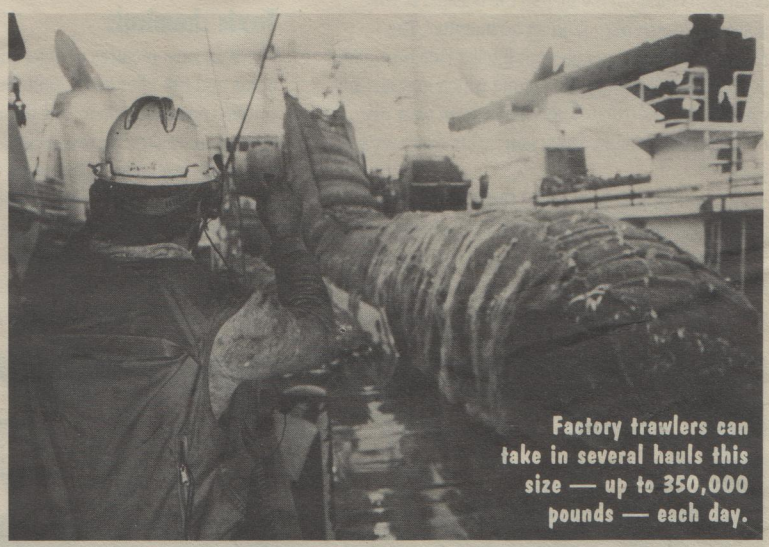
Secretary of Commerce
HCHB Room 5858
Fourteenth and Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20230

Representative _____
US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515

Senator _____
US Senate, Washington, DC 20510

Want to know more?

Greenpeace offers a wealth of specific information on ocean ecology. Write for a copy of the *Stepping Lightly on the Earth*, a guide to non-toxic living, or for a copy of the July/August *Greenpeace* magazine for more on our oceans. Please include $1.00 per item to cover our costs.



Factory trawlers can take in several hauls this size — up to 350,000 pounds — each day.

Greenpeace

Printed with environmentally-safe soy inks